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**Connecticut State Medical Society Testimony in Support of**  
**Senate Bill 301 An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage for Autism**  
**Spectrum Disorders**  
**Presented to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee**  
**February 5, 2009**

Senator Crisco, Representative Fontana and members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, on behalf of the over 7,000 members of the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony in support of Senate Bill 301 An Act Concerning Health Insurance Coverage for Autism Spectrum Disorders.

CSMS has consistently testified before this and other committees regarding the issue of medical necessity. It is our policy that any service determined to be medically necessary by a treating physician should be covered under insurance policies. Unfortunately, the unwillingness of health insurers to routinely cover medically necessary services because of "pre-existing conditions" or other exclusionary efforts has led to the need for us to seek legislation requiring coverage for individuals who have autism and related disorders and conditions.

Recently, CNN has reported that traditional therapies for autism can require \$70,000 to \$80,000 in out of pocket costs for families with autistic children. However, also reported is the fact that therapies costing \$20,000 have shown promise in providing further development for children so they can perform activities of daily living and do things such as brush their teeth, perform general hygiene and carry out basic health and wellness measures; a small price to pay to ensure a greater quality of life for children with autism.

All people with developmental disabilities, especially children, regardless of the degree of their disability, should have access to appropriate and affordable quality medical and dental care. An individual's medical condition and welfare must be the basis of any medical decision and medical necessity decisions must rest with the patient's physician or physicians.

The CSMS, along with the American Medical Association, continues to work with appropriate medical specialty societies to educate and enable physicians to identify children with developmental delay, autism and other developmental disabilities, and we have urged physicians to assist parents in obtaining access to appropriate individualized early intervention services.

Recent evidence suggests that early diagnosis that results in early, appropriate, and consistent intervention are likely associated with better long-term outcomes- we must make sure that these children are seen by their physician early on and there must be consistency in medical access and medical care.

Early diagnosis is imperative to ensure prompt referral to an appropriate early intervention program.

We know more today than we did yesterday about Autism and other spectrum and related disorders and the key seems to be early diagnosis and intervention, which includes medical care provided by physicians. We ask the Connecticut follow the lead of states like Texas and Indiana who have passed similar laws and South Carolina which recently passed Ryan's law insuring up to \$50,000 a year for behavioral therapy up to age 16.

Please support Senate Bill 301.